edward johnson building
faculty of music
university of toronto

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

VICTOR FELDBRILL, CONDUCTOR

Paul Thompson, violin

MACMILLAN THEATRE

8 P.M.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1980

PROGRAM

Prelude, Madrigal and Fantastic Spirits — LOTHAR KLEIN

The composer has provided the following note: These three orchestral pieces are excerpted orchestral movements from my Masque of Orianna, a large work for chorus, soloists and orchestra. The work as a whole is inspired by Elizabethan music and poetry, both of which I admire for their conciseness of craft and imagery. Although these pieces utilize musical quotes of the period, I consider their reconstruction double-edged in historical re-interpretation of that period's music and current musical practice. The Prelude, for example, is based on a single ornamented cadential figure from a keyboard prelude by John Bull. My version of this prelude seeks to evoke contemporary harmonic progressions and figurations latent in the original. The Madrigal is based on the Elizabethan air "Loath to depart" which existed both as a madrigal and as keyboard variations for composers of the period. This orchestral recasting seeks to emulate the delicacy of the Elizabethan madrigal in terms of modern instrumental lyricism. Fantastic Spirits is a medley of motives, some cribbed from keyboard suites, some imitatively composed in 20th century fashion; their intermingling is intended to portray the fantastic humour and hi-jinx of 16th century English music, a humour and grace sadly lost in much of today's music. While a manner of composing with historical models in mind may seem self-conscious or cerebral, the resulting music is simply intended to provide pleasure. May the recomposition of these older fragments provide the listener with the same delight which the originals bequeathed to me.

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major, Op. 61 — LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Allegro ma non troppo
Larghetto
Rondo

The Violin Concerto dates from a particularly productive period in Beethoven's life, appearing together with the Fourth Piano Concerto, the Rasumovsky Quartets and the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies in the years 1806-08. The concerto was written for Franz Clement, who introduced it at the Theater an der Wien on December 23, 1806.

Borodin began working on the B minor symphony in 1869 and completed it in 1875. The Russian Music Society wanted to perform it in 1876, but by this time Borodin had lost the score of the first and last movements. Fortunately, he was ill at the time and could rewrite these outer movements in his sick bed. The work was first performed on February 26, 1877 in St. Petersburg.

The symphony begins with a weighty theme presented by the strings in octaves which Gerald Abraham has called "a magnificent barbaric gesture." Contrast is provided by a lyrical second theme first presented by the cellos. The "barbaric" theme presented triple forte by the entire orchestra provides an impressive close to this movement. The second movement is a Scherzo and Trio. The Scherzo is characterized by the rapid repetition of a single note by the horns and trumpets. The Trio provides relief from the breakneck speed of the Scherzo and is reminiscent of the lyrical second theme from the first movement. According to Stasov, Borodin's biographer, the song-like third movement harkens back to the early Slavic minstrels, and the finale, which follows without a break, evokes "a banquet of legendary heroes held amid the rejoicing populace." The music certainly stands on its own two feet, though. Indeed, Mussorgsky said of this symphony that "of all previous music I could at most place Beethoven's "Eroica" beside it."

Notes by Robin Elliott

PAUL THOMPSON (4th year Bachelor of Music in Performance) is a student of Steven Staryk and spent his childhood in Portugal and Kenya before moving to Victoria, B.C. in 1972. He was concert master of the National Youth Orchestra in 1979 and this past summer was concert master of the Jeunesses Musicales World Youth Orchestra in Denmark and Belgium.

NEXT CONCERT: U. of T. Wind Symphony, October 19, 1980, 3 pm
MacMillan Theatre
NEXT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT: January 24, 1981, 8 pm
MacMillan Theatre